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A PARLIAMENT OF BIRDS.

PERHAPS the two most famous of Chaucerian manuscripts are the codices marked respectively Harley 7334 of the British Museum and Gg 4, 27, of the University Library at Cambridge. Of these the latter presents problems still more complicated than the former, owing to the variety of its contents, which include not only the *Canterbury Tales*, but also the *Troilus*, the *Legend of Good Women*, the *Parlement of Foules*, three short poems by Chaucer, and Lydgate's *Temple of Glass*. This last has been considered by Schick, in his edition for the Early English Text Society; all the Chaucerian poems are in type, and the text of the *Legend* has received examination by Bilderbeck; but two brief non-Chaucerian bits contained in the manuscript, just preceding the *Troilus*, are, so far as I know, still unpublished. These short poems are, first, the poem here printed, which is mentioned by Skeat in vol. I of his Oxford Chaucer, p. 55; and secondly, a pair of poems in a mixture of Latin, French, and English, one from the lover to his lady, the other her "Responcio." The entire codex is in one hand, the firm heavy conventional script reproduced by several examples in the Chaucer Society's *Autotypes*, and of an age not far from 1400. As showing markedly the influence of the *Parlement of Foules*, and thus forming another in the long list of poems produced in imitation of Chaucer, the subjoined text has its interest. Moreover, all material is of value which throws light upon the work of the Gg scribe, the transmitter of texts at once exasperating and invaluable.

(MS. Univ. Lib., Cambr., Gg 4, 27.)

(fol. 8b)

(1)

In may whan euery herte is lygt
And flourys frosschely sprede & sprynge

And Phebus w^t his bemys bryȝte
 Was in þe Bole so cler schynyng
 þ^t sesyn in a morwenyng
 Myn sor for syghte to don socour
 (fol. 9a)

W^t inne a wode was myn walkyng
 Pur moy ouhter hors de dolour

(2)

And in an erber sote & grene
 þat benchede was w^t clourys newe
 A doun I sat me to bemene
 ffor verray seyke ful pale of hewe
 And say be syde a turtill trewe
 ffor leue gan syngyn of hire fere
 In frensch ho so þe rondele knewe
Amour me fait souent pensere

(3)

Cupidis brid þe nyȝtyngale
 W^t streynede þrote be melody
 Sat on a sidre be syde a vale
 And angelly be gan to cry
 þat euere in leue is melody
 And brestis brede w^t debat
 And euere sche song ocy ocy
 Ner esperance mon cuer senbat

(4)

W^t dyuerse tunys þ^t were so sote
 Plesance to don on to nature
 As I lenede vþ on a rote
 W^t werbelys tuned be mesure
 I herde a mauys don hire cure
 To syng mery be ermony
 And tawȝte trewely I ȝow ensure
 Qui bien ayme tard oublye

(5)

ȝit in þe wode þere was discord
¹(þorough) rusti chater yng of þe iay
 Of musik he coude non acord
 Ek pyis vnplesaunt to myn pay
 þey iangeledyn & made gret difray
 þ^t foly kyndelyth loue fere
 þus watte gan syngyn in his lay
 Que je ne facece fors de bien aymmyer

(fol. 9b)

(6)

Robert redbrest & þe wrenne
 ffro bow to bow as þey gunne sterte
 þey seyde agas it is gret synne
 to hyndere ony trewe herte
 And in good feyth for ioie or smerte
 We wele not lettyn in no weye
 To loue / þyn song schal vs not lette
 Biele a biels yeulx on ge ie soye

(7)

þe fesaunt scornere of þe cok
 Be nihyter tyme in frostis colde
 þat nestelyth lowe be sum blok
 Or be sum rote of bosschis olde
 W^t brest vp born sche gan hire bolde
 And w^t dym voys þus sche crew
 Hire hertes sentens to vnfolde
 Ma esporaunce mad deceu

(8)

þe larke longe er it was day
 Gan moun tyn hye in þe eyr
 And drerilyche song þis lay
 In compleynynge be dispeyr
 Allas for on þ^t is so fayr

¹ Here and in stanzas 8 and 9 the manuscript writes þo with an ur-flourish.

ffortune I fayle [þorough] þyn sort
 Troylus in loue I am þyn eyr
 Car vene me ad purchace la mort

(9)

A joly gold fynch frosch & gay
 W^t sunny federys bryȝte & schene
 Song as sche sat vp on de spray
 þe da[r]te of loue haþ cut so kene
 [þorough] out myn herte þat alwey grene
 Myn wounde abidyth for penaunce
 vnmerci causith al myn tene
 De iour en iour par languisaunce

(10)

þe vncurteys coukkow most vn kynde
 Seyde it was foly so to pleyne
 Sithe alday in loue men may fynde

(fol. 10a)

If on be lost whe oþere tweyne
 I can no french soþ for to seyne
 Ne oþer langage w^t outyn oth
 þus am I lasyd in venus cheyne
 I seye as good loue comyth as goþ

(11)

þe popyniay gan to pikyn mod
 And seyde coukkow lat be lat be
 I trowe þu maddyst or þu art wod
 ffor schame to speke swich dyuerste
 ffor I loue on so fayr & fre
 And for hire synge most verteuous
 Erly in morwe whan I hire se
 Estreynnez moy de cuer Ioyous

(12)

þanne spak þe frosty feldefare
 And seyde þ^t loue is dere aboutȝt
 A man to leuyn euere in care

ffor hire þ^t of hym recheþ not
 þerfore put hire out of þy þouȝt
 Sythn on þyne peynys sche wele not rewe
 And let hire grace no more be sowȝt
 But synge for hyre a dew a dewe

(13)

Now certys quod þe tetenose
 Now is þis a wondyr þyng
 ffor he þ^t coueytyþ to han a rose
 Hym must a hyde þe growyng
 Ryȝt so þ^t loue is so gladyng
 þ^t halt vp hertis *par* esperance
 Wherfore of on þus wele I synge
 Je ay en *vous* tut maffyaunce

(14)

þe starlyng gan to sterte & stare
 And seyde þese songis ben so queynte
 I can no skille of swich french fare
 To speke in engelych I haue more deynte
 ffor loue now so sore I feynte
 þow womennes hertis were made of stel

(fol. 10b)

ffor hem oueral I wryte & peynte
 I loue hem alle alyche wel

(15)

þe throstilcock song last of alle
 And seyde it was no stedefastnesse
 In loue to turne as a bal
 Ne no tokene of gentillesse
 Wherfore I rede ȝow alle to dresse
 Of on to synge w^t herte entyre
 þ^t wele not fayle in non distresse
 En dieu maffie sanz departer

Amen

ELEANOR PRESCOTT HAMMOND.